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Application No. 10/626,461
Office Action dated April 2, 2007
Response and Amendment dated _____, 2007

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed April 2, 2007, Applicant sincerely requests reconsideration in view of the above claim amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-20 were presented for examination. Claims 1-20 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1-20 are rejected. In response, claims 1-8, 11-14, 16, 19, and 20 have been amended to clarify the claimed subject matter and correct minor informalities. No new matter is added.

Claims Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1-2, 4-6, 8-12, 14-18, and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Yamaguchi et al. (US Patent Application Pub. No. 2002/00559382), hereinafter "*Yamaguchi*". Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

Amended claim 1 recites an e-mail client that includes "message composition logic operable to compose a message to at least one recipient" and "write protect logic operable to protect the message against subsequent alteration by the at least one recipient, upon receiving a user indication to enable the write protect logic through conversion of a format of the text of the message to a format protected against alterations." The amendments are supported by the Specification (Specification: page 10, line 25 – page 11, line 8).

According to amended claim 1, the email client is configured to convert the text of a message to a format protected against alterations upon being prompted by the user. Examples of such protected formats are provided in claims 7-8. The converted text portion can then be sent to the recipient as an inline image or an attachment within a transmitted message as recited in claims 3 and 5. Thus, the claimed subject matter is about protecting the body or main portion of an e-mail message against alterations by the recipient.

Yamaguchi, on the other hand, discloses an electronic mail distribution system and method for sending electronic mail with a writable file for users requested to edit the file contents, and sending electronic mail with a non-writable file for users not requested to edit the contents of the file (*Yamaguchi*: Abstract, par. 10) (emphasis added).

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According to *Yamaguchi*, a server device for assigning the attached files edits electronic mail sent from an electronic mail server device, makes electronic mail having information showing processing is complete as TO designated recipient mail, converts an appended file to a non-writable format (such as an image format) as CC designated receiver mail, and also makes electronic mail added with information showing processing is complete, and sends the electronic mail to the electronic mail server device (*Yamaguchi*: Abstract, par. 47) (emphasis added).

This is completely different from the Applicant's claimed subject matter as recited in amended claim 1, which is directed to protecting a message against subsequent alteration by a recipient by enabling a write protect logic to convert of a format of the text of the message to a format protected against alterations upon receiving a user indication. Thus, *Yamaguchi* is directed to protecting attachment files in electronic emails by making them non-writable based on a recipient type or recipient domain name (*Yamaguchi*: par. 12 and 13), while amended claim 1 is directed to protecting the text of a message by converting the text to a format protected against alterations upon receiving a user indication, regardless of recipient type.

Therefore, *Yamaguchi* does not anticipate, teach, or suggest Applicant's amended claim 1, and claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested. Claims 2, 4-6, and 8-10 depend from amended claim 1 with additional features. Therefore, claims 2, 4-6, and 8-10 are allowable for at least the same reasons discussed above for amended claim 1.

Amended claim 11 recites a method of protecting e-mail that includes "enabling a user to draft a message" and "converting a content of the message into a write-protected format such that recipients are inhibited from altering the content." As discussed above, *Yamaguchi* does not anticipate, teach, or suggest converting a content of the message into a write-protected format, but discloses making an attachment file to an e-mail non-writable based on whether the recipient is a main recipient (TO) or a copied recipient (CC or BCC) and based on a domain of the recipient's email address.

Therefore, amended claim 11 is also not anticipated by *Yamaguchi*, and is in condition for allowance. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested. Claims 12, 14-18, and 20 depend

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from amended claim 11 with additional features. Therefore, claims 12, 14-18, and 20 are allowable for at least the same reasons discussed above for amended claim 11.

Claims Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 3, 7, 13, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Yamaguchi*. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

Claims 3, 7 and 13, 19 depend from amended independent claims 1 and 11, respectively, with additional features. As discussed above, *Yamaguchi* fails to anticipate, teach, or suggest features of the independent claims 1 and 11. Therefore, claims 3, 7, 13, and 19 are also allowable for at least the same reasons discussed above in conjunction with independent claims 1 and 11. Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

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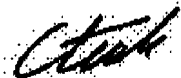
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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all pending claims are believed to be allowable and the application is in condition for allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any further issues regarding this application, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney for the applicant at the telephone number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.



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